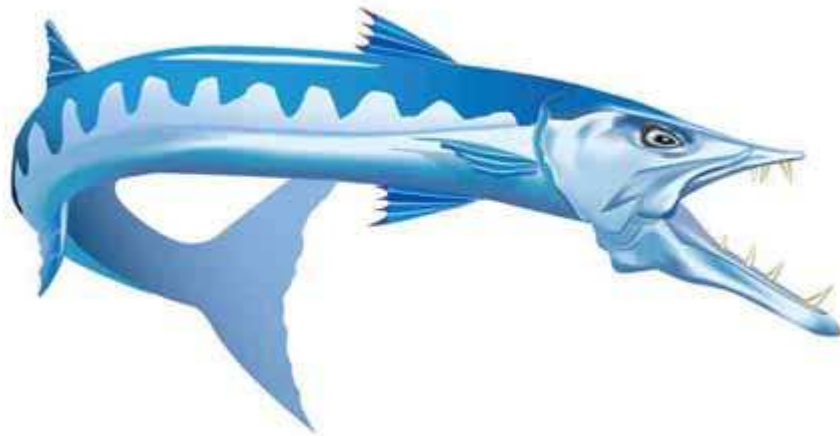


BARRACUDA'S



SWIM TEAM

PARENT/SWIMMER
HANDBOOK

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO THE NORTH PROVIDENCE BARRACUDAS SWIM TEAM

Mission Statement

THE NORTH PROVIDENCE BARRACUDAS SWIM TEAM IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FORMED TO PROMOTE COMPETITIVE SWIMMING FOR ALL QUALIFIED SWIMMERS FROM 7 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE. IT IS THE GOAL OF THE NORTH PROVIDENCE BARRACUDAS TO:

1. Provide safe, beneficial exercise and an opportunity to practice social skills in a positive environment.
2. Help each swimmer realize their potential as an aquatic athlete through instruction in stroke technique, starts, turns and endurance.
3. Develop the qualities of good sportsmanship by becoming an “ELM Tree Winner.”
4. Teach self-discipline, endurance, teamwork and doing one’s best.

Remember, on the North Providence Barracudas Swim Team, each and every swimmer is a winner.

Team Organization

Megan Giammarco, the North Providence Pool & Fitness Aquatics Director, is responsible for pool administration, safety as well as hiring and supervising Coaches.

Ron Lamothe, the Barracuda Head Coach, is responsible for planning practice sessions, and preparing your swimmer for competition. Ron is a Certified Swim Coach, and is certified in Lifeguard Training, CPR, First Aid, AED and WSI (Water Safety Instructor).

The Barracudas Swim Team Parents Club is a vital part of our organization. The responsibilities of the Swim Team Parents Club are to maintain records, purchase supplies, ribbons and plan fundraising events. Parent volunteers are needed to help with these responsibilities. If you have any questions regarding the Swim Team Parents Club, please contact Diane Good, Danielle Erickson, Laurie Walsh or Coach Ron.

The goal is to have volunteer support from 100% of the team families

Guidelines for Swimmers

- Swimmers must abide by the rules of the team and must, at all times, conduct themselves as representatives of the team, behaving in such a way to bring credit to the team and the North Providence Pool & Fitness Center.
- Swimmers are encouraged to attend all practices. Remember that practice will enhance your success as a swimmer, Good swim times comes to those who work for them.
- Treat all equipment you use with respect and consideration. Swimmers may be required to pay for any equipment that is damaged or broken.
- Gum, candy, and other food are not allowed on the pool deck. Snacks may be eaten in the hallway.
- All swimmers are encouraged to bring a plastic water bottle to practice, filled with water. **NO GLASS IS PERMITTED IN OUR POOL AREA.**
- As a North Providence Barracuda you must be flexible and never say “I can’t” Sometimes the coaching staff will ask you to try something new or different which may seem difficult at first but never impossible to complete.
- Swimmers must obey the North Providence Pool & Fitness Center rules and regulations.
- Remember that you determine your own success. Always be ready to work hard at all practices. You will get out of the program what you put into it.
- Swimmers will always respect their coaches and teammates.

Practice Times

Practices are held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 4:30 – 5:30 pm. Swimmers should make every effort to attend all practices. Obviously, the more a swimmer practices, the better they will get.

Barracuda Swim Season

The Barracuda swim season begins the first Monday after Labor Day and ends the last Friday in May.

Practice Guidelines

- **BE ON TIME!** Regularly showing up late can be disruptive to your coaches and teammates. Swimmers generally should be in their suits and on the deck 5 to 10 minutes before practice and should begin stretching. In water practices are designed with a warm up to start and continually build throughout the workout. A swimmer should not miss the warm up. No swimmer should enter the pool without a coach on deck.
- The coaches will make Lane assignments. The coaches will also determine the “order of swimmers” within each lane. Swimmers of similar ability will swim together in a lane.
- Entry into a lane will always be **FEET FIRST**. Never dive into the water unless instructed to by a coach. Always check your lane to be certain it is “clear” of other swimmers before entering the water.
- **No stopping** in the middle of a set. Being tired or missing an interval are not excuses for stopping. You cannot expect to achieve your goals if you give up when the set becomes difficult. Coaches plan sets that are challenging, but never anything they don’t think you can accomplish. This is another reason that attendance is so important. Conditioning is a building process.
- Finish at the wall. This means swim to the wall for all set. Do not stop swimming until you reach the wall.
- Leaders will be assigned to each lane. Each leader must be aware of the interval and the send-off times, otherwise the entire lane begins to miss the interval. Lanes will be lead by swimmers who are experienced with the pace setting. The coaches will determine who leads the lanes.
- Swimmers should always maintain an appropriate distance from one another while swimming. A general rule is to wait until the swimmer in front of you has passed the overhead flags before you begin to swim. Swimmers should **NEVER** touch one another.
- Know all of your times in practice. We will be working a great deal on this skill. If you are aware of your time after each repeat, you will enjoy your swimming much more. You will also begin to understand how you swim, which is very important.
- No hitting, even in “fun!” This is disruptive and shows disrespect for coaches and fellow teammates. It is unacceptable and is cause for disciplinary action.
- Follow the coach’s directions and do your best.
- Consistent tardiness, disruptive behavior or disregard of the coach’s directions will result in the swimmer being asked to swim additional laps. If these problems continue, the coach will discuss the situation with the parents.

Equipment

Swimming does not require a lot of individual equipment. However, there are a few items that will enhance the swimmer's experience.

Swimsuits

Swimmers should wear a competition suit made of lycra or polyester and, if possible, should be black or dark blue in color. If the suit is too loose, air pockets will form under the suit while swimming. These air pockets will make the swimmer less streamlined going through the water and will significantly reduce the swimmer's speed. Girls should wear a one-piece swimsuit, goggles, and cap. For boys, a jammer style swimsuit and goggles are required (caps are optional for boys).

Swim Caps

Swim caps serve three purposes:

1. To help protect the swimmer's hair from chlorine damage.
2. To help streamline the swimmer as they move through the water.
3. To identify the swimmer as a Barracuda Swim Team member.

For these reasons the coaches **strongly recommend** the use of a swim cap.

Goggles

Swimmers wear goggles to help them see in the water and to prevent eye irritation. Several different brands of goggles are available. It is sometimes necessary to try different brands to find the one that works best for you.

Swimmers should wear caps and goggles during each practice. Not only will they protect their hair and eyes, the swimmer will become accustomed to wearing them.

Mesh Bag

Creates ventilation for wet swim gear. Includes: I.D. holder and sturdy nylon webbing adjustable straps.

Swim Fins

THESE SHOULD BE INEXPENSIVE (AROUND \$20) TRAINING FINS AND NOT BIG SCUBA FINS, NOR THE SHORT FINS CALLED ZOOMERS. WE USE FINS TO INCREASE LEG POWER AND INCREASE SPEED. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR SWIMMERS TO SWIM (SOME OF THE TIME) AT SPEEDS GREATER THAN RACE SPEED, SO THEY LEARN TO "GET OUT OF THE WAY OF THE WATER" AND BECOME MORE HYDRO-DYNAMICALLY PERFECT. SWIMMING FAST IS MORE ABOUT GETTING

OUT OF THE WAY OF THE WATER THAN IT IS ABOUT GENERATING HUGE AMOUNTS OF POWER. FINS HELP US LEARN TO DO BOTH.

Strokes

Freestyle: By definition, a freestyle swimmer can use any stroke. But the fastest is the “Australian crawl” (also known as the “front crawl”), which is characterized by an alternating overhand motion of the arms and a flutter kick. The arm movement has four distinct segments, entry, catch, pull, and recovery. Breathing patterns vary depending on the distance of an event and a competitor’s preferred style.

Backstroke: The backstroke is an alternating motion of the arms – much like the freestyle in reverse – with a flutter kick. Backstroke swimmers must stay on their backs, except during the turns.

Breaststroke: The slowest of the four strokes, the breaststroke is highly technical and therefore difficult to master. The arms must move in the same horizontal plane simultaneously; the hands propel forward from the chest (on, under or over the water) and are brought back on or under the water surface but not beyond the hip line. The only exception to this is during the first stroke after the start and turns. The elbows remain underwater except on the stroke before turns or the final touch. The kick is a simultaneous thrust of the legs called a “frog” or breaststroke kick. No flutter or dolphin kicking is allowed.

Butterfly: This is the most powerful and physically demanding stroke. The butterfly involves simultaneous overhead stroking of the arms combined with a dolphin kick. The dolphin kick features both legs moving up and down together. No flutter kicking is allowed.

Individual Medley (commonly abbreviated as IM): The swimmer swims a combination of the strokes in $\frac{1}{4}$ equal lengths of the total length of the event in this order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. The freestyle must be the front crawl and cannot be any form of the other strokes. The swimmer must comply with the rules of each stroke. Transition turns between the strokes shall conform, before the touch, to the finish rules for the stroke being completed and, after the touch, to the turn rules for the stroke about to be swum.

Freestyle Relay: Four swimmers, each swimming freestyle for $\frac{1}{4}$ equal lengths of the total length of the event. No person shall swim more than one leg ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the relay race. Each swimmer must end their leg of the race before the next swimmer is allowed to start their leg.

Medley Relay: Four swimmers, each swimming $\frac{1}{4}$ equal lengths of the total length, except each swimmer swims a different stroke in the following order: Backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (alphabetical order, different than IM order).

Parent Guidelines

Besides the financial commitment, parents make a commitment in time as well. Parents agree to bring their swimmers to practices and are asked to help at all team fundraising events. Participation of this kind makes swimming more enjoyable for the whole family.

Parents, please remember, every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. Encourage your swimmer to concentrate on their individual improvement, and not to compare themselves to other swimmers.

All swimmers experience plateaus during their training. The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance, approaching their personal potential.

Swimmers aged 10 & under are the most inconsistent swimmers, and this can be frustrating for parents and swimmers. We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.

It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parents' job to supply the love, encouragement, and recognition necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves.

Parents' attitudes and models often dictate those of their children. Be enthusiastic about taking your child to practices, participating in fundraising events, and so on.

If you have any questions about your child's training or about team policies, contact your child's coach directly outside of practice time. Criticizing the coach in front of the youngsters undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success. Coaches will be available after practices, and are always available by email outside of the normal practice time.

The communication between coach and swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at all practices. It is imperative that the coach has the swimmer's full attention at these times. It is for this reason that we ask parents to watch practice only from "off the deck" and not to participate in the coaching in any manner. Please allow the coaches to do their job.

In general, it is best for parents to refrain from making stroke corrections or trying to coach their swimmer. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim, it causes considerable and oftentimes insurmountable confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you differ with something, please confer with the coach. The coach will be more than happy to discuss the program with you.

Communications

Good communication is vital to any organization; therefore, we have established numerous channels for the flow of relevant information. It is the responsibility of the swimmer and parent(s) to utilize the following information centers available to you:

Bulletin Board: The team information board is located in the main hallway. It is the responsibility of the parents and swimmers to check the board for team announcements.

Email: Please provide an updated email address to the Team Secretary, Danielle Erickson. She will be sending out various emails throughout the season.

Direct Contact with Coach: If you need to communicate with the coach, please address him after practice. You can also communicate your message in writing if you prefer and leave it at the front desk.